

Listing of Claims:

1-33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) A method for quantitating viable cells in a sample compared to total cells in a sample, comprising:

i. _____-providing a sample containing said total cells,

ii. _____contacting said sample containing total cells with molecule or dye that is detectably altered by enzymatic activity of a viable cell,

iii. _____detecting a total amount of enzymatically enzymatically altered molecule or dye, and

iv. _____correlating said total amount with a standard value that represents the number of total cells in said sample, thereby quantitating viable cells compared to total cells in said sample.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are bacteria.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein said cells are yeast.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the enzymatic activity is esterase activity.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein said enzymatically altered dye or molecule comprises fluorescein diacetate or OREGON GREEN™(2',7'difluorofluorescein).

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein detection is performed by a fluorometer fluorometer.

40. (Currently Amended) A kit for quantifying viable yeast or bacteria, comprising a cell suspension solution, a cell penetrating dye, wherein said dye is enzymatically and detectably altered following penetration of viable cells, and instructions for detecting enzymatically altered dye.